

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04

SIL-01 L-03 H-02 IGA-01 PA-01 PRS-01 /086 W

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R 031028Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8994

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL LAHORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KARACHI 1359

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, ELAB, PINS, PORS, PK

SUBJECT: BANKING CONDITIONS IN KARACHI AMELIORATE AS GOP AND
STRIKERS START NEGOTIATIONS

REF: KARACHI 1309

1. FOLLOWING STONING BY STRIKING BANK EMPLOYEES AND TEARGASSING
BY POLICE IN BANKING DISTRICT OF KARACHI WHICH DEVELOPED LATE
LAST WEEK, AS REPORTED REFTEL, VIOLENCE CEASED ON SATURDAY
JUNE 28 AND THE BANKING DISTRICT HAS CONTINUED QUIET THIS WEEK.
THE MAJORITY OF BANK EMPLOYEES REMAINED ABSENT FROM WORK UNTIL
JULY 2 WHEN GOP TOOK FIRM ACTION IN THREATENING ANY CONTINUING
ABSENTEES FROM BANKS WITH DISMISSAL. (NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS COMMISSION HAD EARLIER DECLARED STRIKE ILLEGAL.) BOTH
OUR BANKING AND LABOR SOURCES REPORT THAT BANKING FUNCTIONS NOW
BEING AGAIN CARRIED ON AT NEAR NORMAL LEVELS IN MANY BANKS,
ALTHOUGH THERE IS STILL ABSENTEEISM AT STATE AND NATIONAL BANKS.
RESUMPTION OF BANKING WORK BROUGHT ABOUT BOTH BY GOP THREAT OF
DISMISSAL FOR ALL CONTINUING ABSENTEE BANK EMPLOYEES AND BY GOP
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OFFER TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES. LEADERS OF BANK EMPLOYEE UNION

REPORTED BY LOCAL PRESS TO BE NEGOTIATING IN ISLAMABAD WITH MINISTER OF LABOR. BECAUSE BANK EMPLOYEES AMONG BEST PAID WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS, THEIR STRIKE DID NOT EVOKE MUCH SYMPATHY OR SUPPORT FROM UNIONS IN OTHER SECTORS. THIS FACTOR PRESUMABLY WILL STRENGTHEN GOP HAND IN ISLAMABAD TALKS.

2. COMMENT: IT IS CONSENSUS HERE THAT WHILE LABOR LEADERS MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT OVERHASTY IN CALLING STRIKE, GOP MUST TAKE MAJOR PORTION OF BLAME FOR EMBARRASSING AND DISRUPTING STRIKE WHICH LARGELY PARALYZED BANKING FUNCTIONS IN KARACHI FOR BETTER PART OF A WEEK. EVEN BUSINESS EXECUTIVES, SPEAKING IN PRIVATE, OPINE THAT GOP SHOULD HAVE BRIEFED UNION LEADERS ON FAVORABLE ASPECTS OF WAGE COMMISSION REPORT AND GOP WILLINGNESS NEGOTIATE ON OTHER ASPECTS OF REPORT PRIOR TO ITS PUBLICATION. DILATORY AND ARBITRARY GOP ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO STRIKE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO BURNISH IMAGE OF EITHER FINANCE OR LABOR MINISTRIES OVER PAST WEEK AND THUS WHOLE GOP IMAGE APPEARS FROM HERE TO HAVE SUFFERED AT LEAST SLIGHTLY OWING TO WIDESPREAD INCONVENIENCE CAUSED BY STRIKE AND THE VIOLENCE WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM IT IN THE MOST VISIBLE AND CENTRAL PART OF KARACHI.

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